

MINUTES – BOARD OF ASSESSORS MEETING, 11/30/04

The Meeting was called to order by Convener Denis O'Regan, and the following were in attendance:

Present: Walter Borders, Brooke Bovard, Denis O'Regan,
Jane Frantz, Tom Frantz, Larry Walker, Laura Wallace
Absent: None

The Oaths of Office for the Arden Board of Assessors were sworn, or affirmed. After each Oath was witnessed, it was duly notarized and recorded. All of the Board Members agreed to the Oath.

The Board organized itself, with Denis O'Regan elected as Chairman of the Board, and Larry Walker elected as Secretary to the Board.

A notebook, called the "Green Book," was distributed to all Members, and it had been prepared by Jane Frantz as a way of providing background information to the incoming Board Members. The Green Book contained five sections, which were:

1. Arden Legal Documents, which included the Act to Reincorporate, Deed of Trust, and the standard Arden Lease.
2. Assessment Reports for 2004, which were the Report of the Board of Assessors and the Alternative Assessment.
3. Report of the 1980 Board of Assessors.
4. Copies of two relevant court cases.
5. Other data submitted to previous Boards.

The intention is to be able to pass these Green Books on to the next Assessors so that there will be a reference guide for future incoming Board Members. It was suggested that a section be added to provide a list of suggestions to future Boards, and it is expected that this section will be updated annually.

The dates for the Board of Assessors meetings were agreed to as follows:

December 6, 2004	Board Meeting
January 10, 2005	Board Meeting
February 17	Board Meeting
February 28	Public Hearing
March 14	Board Meeting
April 11	Board Meeting
May 7	Public Hearing
May 23	Board Meeting
June 8	Public Hearing
June 13	Board Meeting – FINAL

Jane felt that this Board has to make a concerted effort to let Arden residents know the direction that is being taken by present Board. For example, if the Board is going to make a significant departure from practices and policies of previous Boards, the information must be communicated widely, and in several ways. One suggestion was for each Board Member to write a short article for the Arden Page, with one article submitted each month, and this will help to educate and inform the Leaseholders and Residents. It was also suggested that the dates for all Board of Assessors meetings and minutes of the Assessors meetings be posted on the website for the Ardens. It should also be mentioned that all Board of Assessors meetings are open, and visitors **can** be invited to speak, or voice their concerns. All Board minutes are available to anyone. At the public hearings, visitors are welcome to address the Board; regular meetings generally follow public hearings.

Tom Frantz asked how the Trustees collect the land rents, and how the New Castle County real estate taxes and school taxes are paid. Larry said that he land rents are collected by the Trustees by March 25 each year, and those taxes are paid in the following September. New Castle County provides a summary of the tax bills for all of the leaseholds in Arden and a summary of the school taxes for all of the leaseholds, and this is what the Trust pays the County each year. There are some senior citizen school tax rebates, which are handled separately and sent to various residents later, but they do not affect the overall tax bills.

The Board was concerned about the meaning of “Full Rental Value” as this phrase is used in the Deed of Trust, Act to Reincorporate, and the Lease.

The Board does not want to set a value on land that is too high, but at the same time the value should not be too low. There was agreement that the Board would have to come to an agreement on this early on.

Denis asked each Member to read the Green Book, but emphasis should be given to the 1980 Assessors Report and Alton Dahl's essay. Using these two documents as a starting point, the Board will spend the next Meeting trying to develop preliminary positions through philosophical discussions so that Members are clear on the direction of this year's Board of Assessors.

There was a Motion for Adjournment, which was seconded and approved.

Submitted by,

Larry Walker
Secretary of the Board